

Bill Requiring Transparency in High School Sports Data Introduced on National Girls and Women in Sports Day

WASHINGTON – Today, on the 27th annual National Girls and Women in Sports Day, Representative Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY) and Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) introduced legislation to ensure equality for high school girls' athletics by requiring schools to report critical data on funding and participation in boys' and girls' athletic programs.

Currently, young women in high school receive 1.3 million fewer opportunities to play sports than young men, and this gap is increasing. The High School Data Transparency Act (H.R. 455, S. 217) would require that high schools report basic data on the number of female and male students participating in their athletic programs and the expenditures made for their sports teams. Schools already collect the data this legislation would require, but currently it is not publicly available. Consequently, we are seeing fewer and fewer high schools realize full equality for male and female athletes, and more young women being denied the opportunity to realize their full potential both on and off the field.

By contrast, colleges and universities are already required to report this data, and it is due in part to this transparency that American women have unrivaled athletic opportunities at the collegiate level. The passage of the landmark Title IX legislation and the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act have contributed to American women's dominance of international sports, a tradition that would be strengthened with the High School Data Transparency Act.

"The next Abby Wambach and Jenn Suhr are in our nation's high schools right now but unless they are given the opportunity to play, they may never realize their full potential," said Congresswoman Slaughter. "I've met with many Olympic gold medalists who have told me that Title IX – and the accompanying athletic scholarships it made possible – was the reason they were able to attend college and pursue their dreams. Any girl in America who wants to participate in athletics should be given the chance to realize their dreams, and this bill will make sure they have that opportunity."

"There is no doubt that Title IX has opened doors," said Senator Murray. "The challenge for all of us today is to make sure those doors of opportunity stay open for our daughters, our granddaughters, and our great-granddaughters. That's why I'm proud to cosponsor this legislation with Representative Slaughter to ensure equality for high school girls' athletics and allow every young woman the opportunity to participate in school sports."

The High School Data Transparency Act of 2013 will make important strides in ensuring equal opportunities to girls and boys in sports through:

- Data breakdown - The bill directs the Secretary of Education to collect information

regarding participation in athletics broken down by gender, teams, race and ethnicity, and overall expenditures, including items like travel expenses, equipment and uniforms.

- Data reporting- The data required under the bill is already reported, in most cases, to the state Departments of Education and should put a minimal burden on high schools. Several states, including Kentucky, Georgia, and New Mexico, have already implemented similar reporting requirements at the state level, and high school athletics directors from those states report that it usually takes just 2-6 hours of one person's time to complete each year.

- Ensuring data is available to the public - To ensure public access to this important information, this act would require schools to make this data available at the request of students or the public. It would also require the Department of Education to make the collected data available on the agency's website.

- Next steps- With this new information, we can ensure that girls all over the country have the chance not only to improve their athletic ability, but also to develop the qualities of teamwork, discipline, and self-confidence that lead to success on and off the playing field.

Access to sports can have a significant positive impact on girls. Research shows girls who had opportunities to play sports have a lower risk of obesity later in life, lower rates of pregnancy, lower incidence of depression, and more positive body image compared to non-athletes.

Additionally, young women who play sports are more likely to graduate from high school, have higher grades, and score higher on standardized tests than non-athletes.